IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A plasma display panel comprising:

a front substrate and a back substrate that face each other with a space therebetween, the front ~~panel~~ substrate having a plurality of electrodes disposed on a main surface thereof, including a display electrode pair and an electron emitting electrode formed between the display electrode pair; and

a dielectric film and a protective film formed sequentially to cover the electrodes, and luminescent display being performed by applying a voltage to the electrodes to cause a discharge in the space between the substrates, characterized in that:

a plurality of needle crystals composed of a conductive substance or a semiconductor substance are disposed on the electron emitting electrode to reach the protective film by penetrating the dielectric film [[from]] in a thickness direction from a surface of the electrodes, wherein the needle crystals are disposed substantially perpendicular to the main surface of the front substrate to penetrate the dielectric film in a thickness direction, and a material of the dielectric film and a material of the protective film are layered to completely fill gaps between the needle crystals.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the protective film material and the needle crystals form a phase-separated structure.

4. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the needle crystals are graphite crystals.

5. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[4]] 1, wherein a metal layer composed of one or a plurality of metals selected from the group consisting of iron, cobalt, and nickel is interposed between the dielectric film and the needle crystals.

6. (Original) The plasma display panel of claim 4, wherein the graphite crystals are one member selected from the group consisting of carbon nanotubes, graphite nanofibers, and diamond-like carbon.

7. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein the needle crystals are tetrapod-shaped particles.

8. (Original) The plasma display panel of claim 7, wherein the particles are composed of zinc oxide.

9. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein tips of the needle crystals are exposed above the surface of the protective film.

10. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[2]] 1, wherein tips of the needle crystals are buried in the protective film.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[11]] 1, wherein the dielectric film material and the needle crystals form a phase-separated structure.

13. (Currently Amended) The plasma display panel of claim [[11]] 1, wherein the needle crystals are graphite crystals.

14. (Original) The plasma display panel of claim 13, wherein a metal layer composed of one or a plurality of metals selected from the group consisting of iron, cobalt, and nickel is interposed between the electrodes and the needle crystals.

15. (Original) The plasma display panel of claim 13, wherein the graphite crystals are one member selected from the group consisting of carbon nanotubes, graphite nanofibers, and diamond-like carbon.

16.-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The plasma display panel of claim 1, wherein the protective film is composed of one or a compound of metal oxides selected from the group consisting of magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, strontium oxide, and barium oxide.

24. (New) A plasma display panel comprising a front substrate and a back substrate that face each other with a space therebetween, the front panel having a plurality of electrodes disposed on a main surface thereof, and a dielectric film and a protective film formed sequentially to cover the electrodes, and luminescent display being performed by applying a voltage to the electrodes to cause a discharge in the space between the substrates, characterized in that:

a plurality of needle crystals composed of a conductive substance or a semiconductor substance are disposed to reach the protective film by penetrating the dielectric film from in a thickness direction from a surface of the electrodes, wherein when generating a sustain discharge in the space between the substrates, a sustain voltage is applied to the display

electrodes, while holding the electron emitting electrode at one of ground potential and floating potential.

25. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein the protective film material and the needle crystals form a phase-separated structure.

26. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein the needle crystals are graphite crystals.

27. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 26, wherein the graphite crystals are one member selected from the group consisting of carbon nanotubes, graphite nanofibers, and diamond-like carbon.

28. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein a metal layer composed of one or a plurality of metals selected from the group consisting of iron, cobalt, and nickel is interposed between the dielectric film and the needle crystals.

29. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein the needle crystals are tetrapod-shaped particles.

30. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 29, wherein the particles are composed of zinc oxide.

31. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein tips of the needle crystals are exposed above the surface of the protective film.

32. (New) The plasma display panel of claim 24, wherein tips of the needle crystals are buried in the protective film.